

Hertford and Ware Deanery Synod Standing Committee

We aim to see flourishing, Christ-centred communities inspiring people of all ages and backgrounds to discover God, grow in their relationship with Him and respond to His transforming love through serving others.

www.hertfordandwaredeanery.org.uk

Minutes of Special Meeting Thursday 13th January 2021 at 1:15pm held via Zoom

Present: Mrs Janet Bird (JB), Revd Mark Dunstan (MD) (Chair), Mr Mike West, Revd Dr Sarah Forrest (SF), Revd Ysmena Pentelow (YP)

1. MD opened the meeting in prayer
2. Apologies had been received from Mrs Diana Perkins and Mrs Lyn Paddon.
3. No declarations of interest were made.
4. The organisation of the Deanery was considered:

MD had circulated the Diocesan paper on “Deanery Pastoral Committees”. The purpose of the meeting was to determine how the Deanery would ensure that all the areas of work contained within this document would be effectively managed. Three possible ways of doing so had been proposed:

- i) The Standing Committee could continue to cover the full remit,
- ii) A new separate Pastoral Committee could be established, or
- iii) A series of small taskforces or focussed teams could be set up.

It was noted that the Pastoral Committee previously in existence had been merged with the Standing Committee largely for reasons of volunteer time and availability (the overlap of both committees was considerable). This was done with the bishop’s permission rather than his encouragement. It was also noted that sometimes it is only after a committee has been closed that its impact is truly felt. It was recognised by those present that there is considerable work to be done that is beyond the ability of the Standing Committee alone.

It was agreed that the most effective way to cover all the bases would be to create a set of teams with limited remits which would report to the Standing Committee. It was further agreed that these teams may include or even be almost entirely constituted of people who do not currently serve on the Deanery Synod. A member of the Standing Committee would be on each team to ensure proper accountability.

Consideration was given to several of the areas of responsibility:

- *Parish Share*

There was strong agreement that routine matters of Parish Share payment could be addressed by the Rural Dean and Deanery Treasurer, but that other matters like the periodic Share Factor Reviews would require wider representation.

- *Social Action*

Two overlapping issues were discussed by way of example – the homeless and the Waterways Chaplaincy. It was felt that there is already good work happening in the deanery, but there is scope to do better together. It was suggested one of our upcoming Synod meetings hosts a speaker who would bring some inspiration and expertise in this area. It was agreed to discuss this in more detail at the next meeting on 24th Jan (items for presentation at Synod is known to be on the agenda).

- *New Development*

There are significant new housing developments planned and already underway within the deanery. These will alter the needs and opportunities for individual parishes and for the deanery as a whole. Some expertise and shared conversations would be useful as we seek to welcome new neighbours.

- *Fresh Expressions*

It was felt that the deanery would do well to ensure some people took advantage of the Reaching New People training programmes before they end and to develop a local bank of useful resources and expertise. The importance of contextual awareness was noted. It was suggested a Fresh Expressions team might have an ongoing watching brief. It was further noted that their services would be naturally engaged alongside those seeking to meet the new needs created by new developments (though not exclusively).

- *Deanery Mission Action Plan*

It was clear that the first and highest priority for the new DMAP would be to identify the relative priority of the areas above and others (e.g. care of the environment). The meeting agreed that the DMAP need not be complex, but in light of challenges faced by the Church of England as a whole (partly but not exclusively as a result of Covid19) that it should also sensitively take account of questions about Pastoral Reorganisation. The deanery must be proactive in determining the best shape of ministry provision rather than be caught out by well-intentioned but contextually unhelpful changes conceived at “the centre”.

The importance of good communication was raised.

It was agreed that MD and SF would seek, with Revd John Hookway, to nurture better relationships with All Nations College so that we could produce fruitful learning experience for their students as well as ministry gains for our churches.

It was noted that consideration needed to be given to succession planning, especially in light of the recent changes to maximum terms of office for lay synod members. A balance must be found whereby the energy of new members is supported by the wisdom, knowledge and experience of those who have served for longer.

It was agreed that this outline proposal would be reviewed at the next meeting with those colleagues absent from this meeting and the resulting version presented for discussion and agreement at the full Synod meeting in March. MD noted that it is likely that the new Diocesan Secretary will attend that meeting as one of his visits round the diocese to introduce himself.

5. There was no other urgent business.
6. The dates for Synod meetings in 2022-23 were noted:
 - Monday March 21st
 - Thursday July 7th (not 5th)
 - Tuesday November 15th (not 17th)
 - Monday March 20th 2023
 - Thursday July 6th 2023
 - Tuesday November 14th 2023
7. The dates for Standing Committee meetings 2022-3 were noted:
 - Monday January 24th
 - Tuesday May 10th
 - Thursday September 22nd
 - Monday January 23rd 2023
 - Tuesday May 9th 2023
 - Thursday September 21st 2023
8. The meeting closed with the Grace.